God Leading the Israelites

Exodus 13:17 God led them not thru the way of the land of the Philistines, altho that w was near."

INTRO. From Egypt to Palestine in 5 or 6 days, via Philistia. But it took 40 yrs! '40 yrs of struggle, hardship and sorrow. Under God's leadership- pillar of cloud and fire. Why this longest way round to get home? What were God's reasons for this roundabout?

I. God's merciful compassion.

The Israelites, fresh from stubble-field slavery, could not have fought against the strong, warlike Philistines.

But by a long series of trials and combats, and unexpected difficulties, the Lord developed the Chosen People into a disciplined army.

II. Israel need the education of the dessert wandering before inheriting the promised land.

With Egypt and bondage in their blood the Chosen People of God could not have rightly used the promised land. It took them one day to get out of Egypt, but it took 40 yrs to get Egypt out of them.

The wilderness wanderings greatly enriched and deepened their knowledge of themselves and of their God.

III. The wisdom of God's Roundabouts.

1. Coal, iron, electricity, steam. Why these cemturies of toil, striving, endless mistakes and sufferings before discovering them? Why were they not given to us to begin with? They would have enslaved us instead of serving us as they now do.

III. 2. The world had long waited for a Savior-God, why did'nt God send Jesus Christ into the world 2000 yrs sooner? God had no near way to Bethlehem! The world needed the discipline of the desert first. As it was the world almost lost the Christ.

3. And now that the Christ has come, why does not the whole world gladly and immediately accept Him?

Slowly, oh, so slowly, along the roads that commerce has opened, and by the highways of blood-red battle, by a man here and a woman there, by unceasing toil and sacrifice, the world is being led to know Jesus.

4. As with peoples and nations, so with individuals.

Abraham

Lived in Canaan, grew rich in it, but owned nothing of it save his wife's grave. But he was true to God's promise, saying, God must fulfil, not I.

David, persecuted and hunted in the hills, suddenly finds his enemy at his mercy-Saul in the cave. The men of David, "Behold, the day of which the Lord said, 'I will deliver thine enemy into thy hands". One short cut and David would have the throne. But David refused it, believing God's way would be best.

Jesus Christ being tempted. His temptations were the short-cuts to power, the near-ways to success. "Get thee hence, Satan for it is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God."

Conclusion. No short-cut to success. No near-road to Xn character and Xn happiness and joy. Prosperity cannot return at a single bound

We must be patient and keep struggling along, even tho we do make mistakes, But let us, above all else, follow the leading of God and not try to enforce our own ways regardless

How often we mark a path for ourselves, expecting great results, only to be disappointed
Constantine's edict, making Cty the religion of the empire.
5he 18th amendment to do away will all drinking of intoxicating liquors.
Salvation by creeds, instead of by deeds.

"I say this way; God says that.
His way is best, for he knows what
Of lions may beset my road.
I'll follow thee. Lead on, my God!"

The old proverb is still true,"The longest way about is often the nearest way home."
"He that goes straight across may have to carry a cross.
He that goes round about, may have the chance to go without."
God knows best what is good for us.